

the Buck

By HENRY WALLACE PHILLIPS

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day when I was working on a Dakota ranch the boss, a person by the name of Steve, urged me to take an axe and chop a little wood. There was ideal—a Dakota ranch with the mingled pleasures of frost and sun, like hot coffee, and still as silent. I had a good breakfast, excellent health and spirits, could by no means approach the unperturbed, and everything to a pleasant day. But the Copper Lined Killdeer of the song, "Man's hopes rise in the morning and the vigor of the hind only to descend with the fall of a stout gentleman on the heel."

ing the grove of cottonwoods for a smoke and a speculation of things in general, having my then early age that is never of more value than should be doing something

a noise behind me, a peculiar between a snort and a violent turning. I saw a buck deer and the cord and bell around his neck recognized him as one Billy, Steve's eldest boy. He was of a pet.

as the touch needed to compel. Arcadia, the injection of the time I considered to be to the excellent prose of open Who could see that grace creature and remain un- Not I, at all events. I fancied as a knight of old in the west, which gave a touch of the to my speech.

here, then sweet eyed forest cried. And here he came. estimate I should say that he ax handles, or about twelve to be as he up-ended himself, ed his antlers and jumped me, as at a distance. I moved. I ought to king's bishop's eighth, case represented by a fork of rest tree, a wise and subtle strategy, as it resulted in a name.

blend stood erect for awhile, warlike passes with his front hich, by the way, are as for- weapons as a man would care opposed to him; then, seeing ere was no sporting blood in devoured my lunch and went course I promptly imitated as could. I departed.

to I had both liked and ad- Steve. His enormous strength, with an unexpected agility and pebble way he had of treating if you were quite his own age, ed him to me. When I poured troubles to him, however, re- him for allowing such a savage be at large, he caused my feel- undergo a change, for instead pathizing he fell to uproarious er, slapped his leg and swore was the best thing he'd ever of and wished he'd been there to

are probably no worse teases than the big boys who chase on the western prairies. They horse on the kid," and the poor nightmare ridden indeed. If I but with them some one would be an anxious look and carefully around a bunch of grass in the se, explaining to the rest that might be a deer concealed there, he could not be too careful when were wild beasts like that. Then the giggling rascals pass the suspected spot with in- caution, perhaps breaking into a with frightened shrieks of "The deer!" while I tried to look as liked it and strove manfully to the brine of mortification from down my cheeks.

don't let my emotions take the of words, because I had wit h to know that I could not put a barrier between myself and a danger than those husky lads of rather breeches and white hats. All that I had a yearning to see of them encounter the deer at his I did not wish any one hurt was so confident of their physical that I did not think any one I be, but I felt that such an inci- would strengthen their under- ling.

s thing came to pass, and, of all e, on my arch enemy, Steve. If I had the arrangement of details ild not have planned it better. use of my tender years the light day every one was off, leaving me ink up the "bull pen," or men's ters, with mud against the cold approaching winter. Steve had tak- his eldest boy on a trip to pick out a good wood.

esently arrived the boy, hatless, ing as fast as he could tear, the whistling in his lungs. "Come k!" was the message. seems the deer had followed the ple, and when the boy fooled with old playmate the deer knocked him n and would have hurt him badly that his father instantly jumped the fray and grabbed the animal the horns with the intention of ating his head off. The head was ened on more than Steve posed. The powerful man thought would be an easy matter to throw

his antagonist. What he did not at all take into account was that the buck was both larger and stronger than he. Though raised on a bottle, the deer had grown into a splendid specimen of its kind. He was by long odds the largest deer I ever saw.

Well, Steve got the surprise of his life. It didn't take him long to see the battle was all against him; that the best he could hope to do was to hold his own until help arrived; so he sent the boy off hotfoot. Although his power for a short exertion was great, Steve was in no kind of training, having allowed himself to fatten up and being an inordinate user of tobacco. Per contra, the deer felt freshened and invigorated by exertion. That is the deuce of it in struggling with an animal—he doesn't tire.

I know that Steve was in some trouble, or he never would have sent for help. The boy's evident distress denied the joke I might otherwise have suspected, so I grabbed up a rope and made for the grove, the boy trailing me. I should have waited to get a gun, but I didn't think of it. Those were the days when I could run, when it was an exhilaration to sail over the prairie. The importance of my position as rescuer, which any one who has been a boy will understand, lent springs to my feet.

It was well for Steve that mine were speedy legs. When I got there his face was gray and mottled, like an old man's, and his mouth had a weak droop, very unlike the devil-may-care Steve. The two had pawed up the ground for rods around in the fight. The deer's horns beneath where the man gripped them were wet with the blood of his torn palms. Steve's knees, arms and head were trembling as if in an ague fit. He was all in physically, but the inner man arose strong above defeat. "Here's your deer—kid!" he gasped. "I—kept—him—for you!"

I yelled to him to hold hard for one second, took a running jump and landed on Mr. Buck's flank with both feet. It was something of a shock. Over went deer, man and boy. I was on my pins in a jiffy, snapped the noose over the deer's hind legs, tangled him up anyhow in the rest of the riata and snubbed him to the nearest tree. Then Steve got up and walked away to where he could be ill with comfort. And he was good and sick.

When he felt better he arose and opened his knife, swearing that he would slit that critter's throat from ear to ear, but Steve, Jr., who before this had arrived on the scene, pleaded so hard for the life of the pet that big Steve relented and Mr. Billy Buck was saved for further mischief.

That afternoon two of us rode out and roped him, "spreading" him between us as we dragged him home. He fought every step of the way. My companion, a hot-headed Montana boy, was for killing him a half dozen times. However, feeling that the deer had vindicated me, I had a pride in him and kept him for a timely end. We turned him loose in a corral with a blooded bull calf, some milk cows, work steers and other tame animals. "And I bet you he has 'em all chewing the rag inside of twenty-four hours," said my companion.

That night Steve made ample amend for his former mirth. Indeed, he praised my fleetness and promptness of action so highly that I was seized by an access of modesty as unexpected as it was disorganizing.

The next day Steve stood on the roof of the shed at the end of Billy Buck's corral. Suddenly he straightened up and waved his hat. "Deer and bull fight!" he called. "Come a-running, everybody!" We dropped our labors and sprinted for the corral, there to sit upon the shed and watch the combat. Steve didn't know what began the trouble, but when I got there the young bull was facing the deer, his head down, blowing the dust in twin clouds before him, hooking the dirt over his back in regular fighting bull fashion and anon saying, "Bh-ur-oor!" in an adolescent bass profundo, most ridiculously broken by streaks of soprano. When these shrill notes occurred the little bull rolled his eyes around as much as to say, "Who did that?" and we, swinging our legs on the shed roof, laughed gleefully and encouraged him to sail in.

The bull, having gone through the preliminaries of his code, cocked his tail straight in the air and charged. The buck waited until he was within three feet; then he shot sideways and shot back again, his antlers beating with a drumstick sound on the bull's ribs. "Baw-aw!" said the bull. Probably that hurt.

Again bull faced buck. This time the bovine eye wore a look of troubled wonderment, while one could mark an evil grin beneath the twitching nose of his antagonist, and his bleat had changed to a tone which recalled the pointing finger and unwelcome "H-nh-ha!" that greets misfortune in childhood. "I told you so!" it said. The bull, however, is an animal not easily discouraged. Once more he lowered his foolish head and braved forth like a locomotive.

But it would take too long to tell all the things Billy Buck did to that bull. He simply walked all over him and jabbed and raked and poked. Away went the bull, his erstwhile proudly erect tail slewed sideways in token of struck colors, a sign of surrender disregarded by his enemy, who thought the giving of signals to cease fighting prerogative of his office. Away went the old cows and the work steers as the horses in a thundering circuit of the corral, the horned stock bawling terror and Billy Buck "Baw-aw!" him.

"Gad, I'm glad I didn't slit his wind pipe!" said Steve. "He's a corker!" Billy drove his circus parade around

about six times before his proud soul was satisfied. Then he took the center of the ring and belted a chant of victory in a fuller voice than he had given before, while the other brutes, gathered by the fence, looked at him in stupefaction.

Only once more did Billy Buck figure in history before he left us for a larger field in town, and on this occasion, for the first and last time in his career, he got the worst of it.

A lone Injun came to the ranch, a very tall, grave man, clad in comic picture clothes. A battered high hat surmounted his block of midnight hair, and a cutaway coat built for a man much smaller around the chest held his torso in bondage. As it was warm on the day he arrived, he had discarded his trousers. A breech cloth was plenty leg gear, he thought. He bore a letter of recommendation from a white friend.

"Plenty good letter," said he as he handed the missive over. I read it aloud for the benefit of the assembled ranch.

It ran: This is Jimmy-Hit-the-Bottle, the worst specimen of a bad tribe. He will steal anything he can lift. If he know there was such a thing as a cemetery, he'd walk fifty miles to rob it. Any citizen wishing to do his country a service will kindly hit him on the head with an ax. JACK FORSYTHE.

"Plenty good letter!" cried the Injun, his face beaming with pride.

I coughed and said it was indeed vigorous. Steve and the boys fled the scene. Now, we knew that Jimmy was a good Injun or he wouldn't have had any letter at all. That great grave face, coupling the seriousness of childhood and of philosophy, simply offered an irresistible temptation to the writer of the letter. There was something pathetic in the way the gigantic savage folded up his treasure and replaced it in his coat. I think Forsythe would have weakened had he seen it. Still, after we laughed, we felt all the better disposed toward Jimmy, so I don't know but it was a good form of introduction, after all. Jimmy was looking for work, a subject of research not general to the Injun, but by no means so rare as his detractors would make out. He got it. The job was to clean out Billy Buck's corral. Steve found employment for the hands else to home for the day, that no one should miss the result. It is always business first on the ranch, and a practical joke takes precedence over other labors. Steve hung around the corral, where he could peek through the chinks. Hoarse whispers inquired, "Anything up yet?" were for so long answered in the negative that it seemed the day had been in vain. At last the welcome sound rang out: "Injun and deer fight! Everybody run!" We flew, breathless with anticipatory chuckles. We landed on top of the shed to witness an inspiring scene—one long-legged, six-foot and a half Injun, suitably attired in a plug hat, cutaway coat, breech cloth and moccasins, grappling in mortal combat a large and very angry deer.

Splendid was the exhibition of strength and agility we looked upon; wonderful, but chaotic. I would defy a moving picture camera to resolve that tornado into its elements of deer and Injun. We were conscious of curious illusions, such as a deer with a dozen heads growing out of all parts of a body as spherical as this our earth, and an Injun with legs that yielded all laws of gravitation and anatomy.

Poor Billy Buck! He outdid the wildest of our pitching horses for a half minute, but the two hundred and odd pounds he had on his back told. He couldn't hold the gait. Jimmy wrapped those long legs around him, the deer's tail in one hand, the horn in the other and the ear between his teeth, and waited in grim determination. "Me-ah-nah!" said the deer, dropping to his knees.

Jimmy got off him. Billy picked himself up and scampered to the other end of the corral, shaking his head. The Injun straightened himself up, making an effort to draw a veil of modesty over the pride that shone in his eyes. "H-nh!" he said. "Poor deer tackle Tatunka-Sutah!" ("Tatunka-Sutah," or Strong Bull, was the more poetic title of Jimmy-Hit-the-Bottle among his own kind.)

He then gravely punched his plug hat into some kind of shape and resumed his work. We pitched in and bought Jimmy a shiny new plug hat, which will lead me far afield if I don't drop the subject.

Well, he was master of Mr. Billy Buck. When he entered the corral the deer stepped rapidly up to the farther corner and stayed there. Now came the broadening of Billy's career. A certain man in our nearest town kept a hotel near the railroad depot. For the benefit of the passengers who had to stop there a half hour for meals and recreation this man had a sort of menagerie of the animals natural to the country. There were a bear, a mountain lion, several coyotes, swifts, antelope, deer and a big timber wolf, all in a wire net inclosed park.

It so happened that Steve met Mr. D., the hotel proprietor, on one of his trips to town and told him what a splendid deer he had out at the ranch. Mr. D. became instantly possessed of a desire to own the marvel, and a bargain was concluded on the spot. Billy by this time had shed his horns and was all that could be wished for in the way of amiability. We tied his legs together and shipped him to town in a wagon.

Steve did not trick Mr. D. He told him plainly that the deer was a dangerous customer and that to be careful was to retain a whole skin, but the hotel proprietor, a little fat, pompous man, with a big bass voice—the kind of a man who could have made the world in three days and rested from the fourth to the seventh inclusive had it been necessary—thought he knew something of the deer character. "That beautiful creature, with its mild eyes and humble mien, hurt any one? Nonsense!"

So he had a fine collar made for Billy, with his name on a silver plate, and then led him around town at the end of a chain, being a vain little man who liked to attract attention by any available means. All worked well until the next fall. Mr. D. was lulled into false security by the docility of his pet and allowed him the freedom of the city regardless of protest.

Then came the spectacular end of Billy's easy life. It occurred on another warm autumn day. The passengers of the noon train from the east were assembled in the hotel dining room, putting away supplies as fast as possible, the train being late. The room was crowded, the waiters rushing. Mr. D., swelling with importance, Billy entered the room unnoticed in the general hurry. A negro waiter passed him, holding two loaded trays. Perhaps he brushed against Billy; perhaps Billy didn't even need a provocation. At any rate as the waiter started down the room Billy snubbed him from behind, and dinner was served! When the two tray loads of hot coffee, potatoes, soup, chicken and the rest of the bill of fare landed all over the nearest table of guests there was a commotion. Men leaped to their feet, with words that showed they were no gentlemen, making frantic efforts to wipe away the scalding liquids trickling over them. The ladies shrieked and were tearful over the ruin of their pretty gowns.

Mr. D. on the spot instantly quieted his guests as best he could on the one hand and berated the waiter for a clumsy, clubfooted baboon on the other. Explanation was difficult if not impossible. Arms flew, hard words flew, the male guests were not backward in adding their say. Then, even as I had been before, the colored man was vindicated.

Scooned under the tables, with the exception of a handful who had preferred getting on top of them. Outside three cow punchers who chanced to be riding by were perfectly astonished by the noises that came from that hotel. They dismounted and investigated. When they saw the feet projecting from beneath the cloths and the groups in statuesque poses above they concluded not to interfere, although strongly urged by the victims.

"You are cowards!" cried the man with the two women. The punchers joyfully acquiesced and said, "Sick 'em, boy!" to the deer. Meanwhile the express and the United States mail were waiting. The conductor, watch in hand, strode up and down the platform.

"What do you suppose they're doing over there?" he asked his brakeman.

The brakeman shrugged his shoulders. "Ask them punchers," he replied. The conductor lifted his voice. "What's the matter?" he called.

"Oh, come and see! Come and see!" said the punchers. "It's too good to tell!"

The conductor shut his watch with a snap. "Five minutes later," he said. "Pete, go and hustle them people over here. I start in three minutes by the watch."

"Sure," said Pete and slouched across. Pete was surprised at the sight that met his gaze, but orders were orders. He walked up and kicked Billy, at the same time shouting: "All aboard for the west! Git a wiggle on yer!"

The man owed his life to the fact that the deer could get no foothold on the slippery hardwood floor; otherwise he would have been gored to death. As it was, Billy tried to push, and his feet shot out. Man and deer came to the floor together, the brakeman holding hard. The passengers boiled out of the hotel like a mountain torrent. The punchers, thinking that the man was in danger, sprang through the windows and tied the deer. Pete gasped his thanks and hustled out to catch his train. No one was left but Billy, the punchers, the waiters and Mr. D.

"This your deer?" inquired the punchers of the latter.

"It is," said Mr. D. "Take him out and hang him. Don't shoot him. Hang him!"

"All right," replied the punchers. They took Billy out and turned him loose in the deer pen.

"Reckon the old man 'd feel better about it tomorrow," they said. And it came to pass that the old man did feel better, so Billy was spared. Perhaps if you have traveled to the west you have seen him, a noble representative of his kind. Well, this is his private history, which his looks belie.

RED RIVER PROSPECTOR NOTES.

T. A. Melson left yesterday on a business trip to Raton.

B. E. Hatch left Monday for Cimarron where he expects to spend the next two or three months.

Mrs. E. A. Snow visited a few days the past week with her daughter, Mrs. E. C. Wallace at the Turner ranch.

The Sunday evening class meetings and the prayer meetings Wednesday evenings will commence at 7:30 p. m. sharp.

Donaciana Graham, sheriff of Taos county, has appointed H. D. Dutcher, deputy sheriff of this precinct. It is a good and popular appointment.

The owners, J. M. Moad and A. D. Hawk, of the Ethel and May Ann group of mining claims have received the final patent receipt of the above claims.

Jack Kelly, a conductor on one of the branch roads of St. Louis, Rocky Mountain & Pacific Railway company, was a few days in camp this week visiting his brother, R. P. Kelly, who has charge of the work for the Rhyolite Mining and Milling company on Placer creek.

H. K. Christensen, a contractor on the Rocky Mountain & Pacific railroad passed through town the past week. He built eleven miles of the road. He was on his way back to Cimarron where he will undoubtedly have charge of some of the grading on the new road known as the Cimarron & Northwestern. From the Tres Piedras Mining Reporter.

A bridge is being built across the Rio Grande at Rinconada.

A. Clouthier, postmaster at Taos, is said to have resigned the office and J. J. Vigil is an applicant for the office.

Enrique Gonzales, ex-County Clerk, has been appointed deputy by the new county treasurer, Nicholas Anaya.

Mrs. A. G. Muller is expected in Taos shortly on a visit to her parents.

It is said \$130 ore was encountered in the Red Fissure workings recently at Bromide.

Ore is being hauled by sled from the Whale mine at Bromide to the mill on the Tueros.

THE RHYOLITE PROPERTY SHOWING BETTER.

The Rhyolite Mining & Milling company have let another contract on their property to R. P. Kelly. Mr. Kelly has just finished one contract on the property and opened up the lead at a point where it is over eighteen feet between walls. On the present contract Mr. Kelly will run a tunnel following the lead to the north and we understand will cross cut the lead at certain points to find if possible the extent of this large deposit of ore. Mr. Kelly claims the ore is of a sulphide kind but it has indications that the lead carries some ore that belongs to the telluride class. The company has been selling considerable amount of stock in the past year and after doing some more prospecting they will this coming summer put on machinery and go down after the precious metal.

SPRINGER STOCKMAN NOTES.

Mrs. S. B. Davis came down from her home at Raton Tuesday to spend a few days with relatives here.

Mrs. J. M. Caldwell was in the city the first of the week from the Halls Peak country.

Dr. Lefforge visited Chico professionally to see a little boy of E. P. Edwards who was sick. He left the little fellow getting along nicely.

Mrs. Darl Brown went up to Dawson Monday. The family expect to locate there about the first of the month and engage in the hotel business.

S. Floersheim of this city and his brother, J. Floersheim of Roy, left on Monday for Hamburg, Germany, where they will be present at the golden wedding of their parents.

Mrs. C. E. Hartley was called to Elmwood, Kansas, last Saturday by a telegram announcing the death of a little niece. She had just returned from a visit to Denver as she received the sad news.

J. M. Higgins returned home Friday of last week from Missouri where he spent about three weeks in Johnson county. He declares he never saw the sun but one day during that time, and he told those people he would ship them back a little sunshine when he returned home.

Roy Wright and wife of San Bernardino, California, and Wm. Hanson and wife of San Marcial, N. M., came in last Saturday for a short visit with the family of R. E. Alldredge. The latter left Monday for their San Marcial home. Mrs. Wright and Mr. Hanson are sister and brother of Mrs. Alldredge.

It doesn't look bad, no it doesn't. One Springer firm last month raised its capital stock from \$100,000 to \$200,000. Things are getting ready to move much more livelier in this country. Watch them.

The Swastika Club.

The Swastika club met on Tuesday, January 29, 1907, with Mrs. Kremis, Mrs. R. E. Alldredge, vice-president, presiding; members present were the Mesdames Warder, Kremis, Stansell, C. F. Hortenstein, Cole and Miss Gehring. Mrs. Atkinson, aunt of Mrs. C. F. Hortenstein, Mrs. R. Wright, sister of Mrs. R. E. Alldredge, Miss Olson, sister of Mrs. Kremis, Mrs. Devine, Mrs. M. Hortenstein, Mrs. Crocker and Miss Fay Alldredge were the guests in attendance. After the regular business of the club was transacted Miss Alldredge sang a very beautiful song. All then enjoyed a game of "Auction," from which each guest received a pretty souvenir. A very dainty lunch was then served by the hostess.

BROWN-ABREU.

Wednesday morning at the Catholic church parsonage in this city, the Rev. Father Ceiler officiating, Miss Gertrude Brown and Ramon E. Abreu were united in the holy bonds of matrimony, but a few relatives of the contracting couple witnessing the ceremony.

They left at once for Rayado where they will make their home.

The bride is the eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Darl Brown of this city, is a most excellent young lady with a host of friends who wish her well.

The groom is the youngest son of Mrs. P. B. Abreu of Rayado, and his luck in securing so excellent a life companion is met with the congratulations of his friends.

They at once went to housekeeping at Rayado where the groom had nicely fitted up a home for his bride.

The Stockman, with pleasure, joins the many friends of the newly made man and wife in congratulations, wishing them an overabundance of the joys and fruits of life and few of its sorrows.

The Fox railroad construction outfit has arrived at Santa Rosa and will immediately commence the construction of a large concrete dam on Los Tanos creek about two miles east of Santa Rosa.

At about the same point in Los Tanos canon a large rock crusher will be put in next month that will give employment to sixty men for two years. The product will be used for ballasting the road bed.